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Letter dated 27 December 2012 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to refer to the statement by the President of the Security Council of 19 October 2012 (S/PRST/2012/22) and resolution 2076 (2012) of 20 November 2012, in which the Council requested that I report on options, and their implications, for the possible redeployment of contingents of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and additional force multipliers to improve the Mission's ability to implement its mandate. In this regard, my Special Representative for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Roger Meece, and the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Hervé Ladsous, held consultations with the major troop- and police-contributing countries of MONUSCO, on 21 and 23 November 2012, respectively, to discuss the strengthening of the Mission's capabilities and posture. At the request of Council members, Mr. Ladsous also outlined the additional requirements of MONUSCO during the consultations of the Security Council on 7 December 2012.

The situation on the ground remains tense, as the presence of the Mouvement du 23 mars (M23) in various areas in Rutshuru territory, North Kivu, continues to pose a serious threat to the protection of civilians. MONUSCO is undertaking a number of contingency plans and has enhanced its activities in and around Goma. In this regard, the Mission's night patrolling throughout North Kivu has tripled, while 14 temporary deployments of MONUSCO troops have been established in South Kivu. A company of the Ghanaian battalion based in Kinshasa and a company of the Egyptian battalion stationed at the Kavumu airfield in South Kivu have been placed on alert for quick reaction should the situation so require.

In addition to the steps taken within the Mission's existing resources, additional capacities are required in the immediate term to achieve the following objectives and tasks: (a) improve the ability of MONUSCO to protect civilians; (b) monitor and report on flows of arms and related materiel across the borders of eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo; (c) provide increased logistical and technical support to the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region Expanded Joint Verification Mechanism in monitoring the border areas in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo; and (d) ensure that MONUSCO has the necessary surveillance capabilities in terms of both equipment and personnel.

In this regard, and in order to enhance the operational mobility of MONUSCO, it will be critical to complete the deployment of the authorized number of attack and utility helicopters, increasing them from the currently deployed 23 to the authorized 29.

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It has also been determined that acquiring one additional utility helicopter and two attack helicopters is required, thus bringing the total number of needed military helicopters to 32. The military helicopters require night vision capacities in order to operate at night, a critical shortcoming that the Mission faces.

Additional information capabilities are also needed for advanced information collation, analysis and dissemination to enhance situational awareness and to permit timely decision-making. This includes external imagery/electronic equipment and associated analysis capabilities, notably surveillance capability such as that provided by unmanned aerial systems. A greater riverine capacity, including an additional riverine unit and shore-based radar equipment, is required in order to provide enhanced coverage on lakes and rivers in the Kivus.

With regard to potential financial implications, the Secretariat might need to request additional funding through the established channels.

These immediate requirements will enable MONUSCO to better cope with the current situation in North Kivu. However, the requirements do not include the enforcement capacities that may be necessary to address the threat posed by armed groups in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. In order to harmonize the regional initiatives and proposals of the United Nations in that regard, I have requested the United Nations Military Adviser, Lieutenant General Babacar Gaye, to travel to the region early in January 2013 to meet the President of the United Republic of Tanzania, Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, and the President of Uganda, Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, in their capacities as the Chairs of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, respectively. Lieutenant General Gaye is then expected to convene a meeting in Addis Ababa with the military representatives of the African Union, the Conference and SADC to work out the modalities and options, including incorporating the troops earmarked for the regional Neutral International Force under the mandate and authorized strength of MONUSCO.

I intend to revert to the Security Council with detailed options in that regard and the overall reconfiguration of the MONUSCO force, once the Secretariat has completed its consultations with the regional partners and the troop-contributing countries of MONUSCO.

(*Signed*) **BAN** Ki-moon